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Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

Letter dated 22 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with instructions received from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 3 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina (A/64/653) addressed to you, transmitting in an annex a note of protest dated 2 February 2010 submitted by the Republic of Argentina to the United Kingdom on hydrocarbon exploration in the Falkland Islands.

The Government of the United Kingdom has no doubt about the sovereignty of the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and their surrounding maritime areas. The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, underlies our position on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiation on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the Falkland Islanders so wish.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the United Kingdom reply, dated 22 February 2010, submitted by the United Kingdom to the Republic of Argentina (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of the present letter as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 23.

(*Signed*) Mark **Lyall Grant**

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presents its compliments to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship and has the honour to refer to the Ministry's note of 2 February 2010.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The United Kingdom is clear that exploration for, and any exploitation of, hydrocarbon reserves in Falkland Islands waters are matters of legitimate business. The United Kingdom supports the Falkland Islands Government in its wish to develop its hydrocarbons sector.

The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, underlies the United Kingdom's position on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiation on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the Falkland Islanders so wish.

The Government of the Republic of Argentina correctly points out that it chose to withdraw from the 1995 Joint Declaration on Cooperation over Offshore Activities in the South West Atlantic in 2007. In any event, the Falkland Islands' current hydrocarbon exploration is taking place outside the area of cooperation identified in the 1995 Joint Declaration. The Government of the United Kingdom remains willing to discuss any areas of mutual interest in the South Atlantic with the Government of the Republic of Argentina.

The Embassy of the United Kingdom avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship the assurances of its highest consideration.